

REPORT
OF
EARHART SEARCH

By

U.S. NAVY AND U.S. COAST GUARD

2-18 JULY 1937

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
FOURTEENTH NAVAL DISTRICT
 PEARL HARBOR, T. H.

WHL/3

JUL 31 1937

From: Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District,
 To: The Chief of Naval Operations.

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

Enclosures: (A) Dispatch file.
 (B) Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Cutter, ITASCA, report.
 (C) Photostat ITASCA Track Chart.
 (D) Commanding Officer, USS COLORADO, report.
 (E) Photostat COLORADO Track Chart, Sheet 1.
 (F) " " " " " " 2.
 (G) Photostat USS SWAN Track Chart.
 (H) Photostat USS LAMSON Track Chart.
 (I) Photostat USS DAYTON Track Chart.
 (J) Photostat USS CUSHING Track Chart.
 (K) Commanding Officer LEXINGTON Group Report.

1. Amelia Earhart, Gurney and Fred J. Noonan, engaged in a land plane flight around the world, departed Loe, New Guinea, at 1300, 1 July (zone-minus-ten-time), or 1400, 1 July, S.C.T., for Howland Island. The flight was guarded by the USS ONTARIO at approximately midpoint of the flight and by the U.S.C.G.C. ITASCA at Howland. The USS SWAN was on station midway from Howland and Honolulu to guard the next leg of the flight. Except for the services of the ONTARIO and the SWAN and weather reports from the Fleet Air Base, Pearl Harbor, the Navy had no connection with the flight.

2. At 1100, 2 July, information was received that failure of the flight was imminent, and shortly thereafter that the plane was believed to be down.

3. At 1400, 2 July, the Commandant conferred with the Commander, Minecraft, Battle Force (the Senior Officer Present Afloat), and the Commanding Officer, Fleet Air Base, Pearl Harbor. It was agreed that no naval vessel stationed in Hawaiian waters was suitable for search operations in the distant area and that a PBY seaplane could reach Howland Island and under favorable conditions could carry out limited operations, basing on the ITASCA. The Department was so informed. Meanwhile, the Department had directed the Commandant of the Fourteenth

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

Naval District to use all available naval facilities in the search. Accordingly, it was decided to dispatch a seaplane to Howland and at 1925, 2 July, patrol plane G-P-3, Lieutenant W. V. Harvey, commanding, departed from Pearl Harbor Howland Island. The ITASCA was directed to stand by at Howland to tend the plane and the SWAN to proceed toward Howland.

4. The Department promptly approved the recommendation that the COLORADO, then in Honolulu, be diverted from her R.O.T.C. Cruise to join the search, and the COLORADO was at 2115, 2 July, ordered to proceed, when fueled. In a conference with the Commanding Officer, USS COLORADO, prior to his departure from Pearl Harbor, he was given all information then available, and it was agreed that the COLORADO should first search the southeast quadrant from Howland and the Phoenix Islands.

5. The patrol plane, commanded by Lieutenant Harvey and manned by the following personnel, proceeded toward Howland through the night of 2-3 July, contacting the SWAN enroute on schedule.

PERSONNEL, PATROL PLANE G-P-3

Lieutenant W. V. Harvey, commanding.

Lieutenant (jg) W. M. Drane

Lieutenant (jg) L. S. Lytle

Aviation Cadet P. W. Smith

W. C. Curry, A.C.M.

E. J. McCormick, C.M.

F. M. Williams 3d. R.M. 2-c.

C. L. English, A.M. 2-c.

At 0710, 3 July, Lieutenant Harvey reported:

2003 APPROXIMATE POSITION LAT 06-35 LONG 72-00
PERIOD LAST TWO HOURS IN EXTREMELY BAD WEATHER
BETWEEN ALTITUDE 2000 AND 12000 FEET SNOW SLEET
RAIN ELECTRICAL STORMS PERIOD IN DAYLIGHT CON-
DITIONS LOOK EQUALLY BAD CLOUD TOPS APPEAR TO BE
18000 FEET OR MORE PERIOD AM RETURNING TO PEARL
HARBOR NOW HAVE 900 GALLONS FUEL ON BOARD 1710

6. Vessels were dispatched from Pearl Harbor to guard the return flight of plane G-P-3 in case of fuel exhaustion, but the prudence and skill of personnel safely returned the

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

plane to Pearl Harbor at 1926, 3 July, after being in the air for 24 hours and 5 minutes and flying approximately 2570 sea miles. Faultless two-way communication was maintained throughout the flight of the plane; navigation was accurate, as evidenced by contacts with surface vessels and landfall, all of which occurred precisely on schedule. This performance of duty reflects great credit on Lieutenant Harvey and the officers and men of his crew.

7. The Department inquired as to the feasibility of seaplane search operations basing on Johnston Island. The Commandant considered this impracticable, due to the 2200 mile turn around between Howland and Johnston Islands and stated that if a more extensive search than possible with the COLORADO, ITASCA, and SWAN were desired, a carrier would be the most practicable and efficient unit.

8. The LEXINGTON Group was organized on 4 July, consisting of the LEXINGTON, LAMSON, DRAYTON, CUSHING, and PERKINS (the last vessel was later detached from the group, due to machinery trouble). Under command of Captain J. S. Dowell, Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two, this group was expeditiously assembled and departed for Hawaii, for fuel, thence to proceed to the search area.

9. The ITASCA meanwhile had resumed her search operations in the vicinity of Howland Island, as shown in her report and track chart. The difficulties confronting her may be inferred from the following dispatches:

FROM: ITASCA
TO : COMNAWSEC
INFO: COMFRANDIV

6002 YOUR 6002 1401 WE HAVE HAD NO POSITIONS
COSIA SPENDS COMIA OR COURSES FROM EARHARTS
PLANE EXCEPT SO CALLED LINE OF POSITION AT 0843
WHICH HAD NO REFERENCE POINT PERIOD SHE GAVE US
NONE OF HER BEARINGS PERIOD BELIEVE SHE PASSED
TO NORTH AND WEST OF ISLAND ABOUT 0800 AND
MISSED IT IN THE CLARK OF RISING SUN THOUGH!
WE WERE SMOKING HEAVILY AT THAT TIME PERIOD
JUDGE SHE CAME DOWN BETWEEN 337 AND 90 FROM
HOWLAND AND WITHIN 100 MILES PERIOD HAVE
BROADCAST AS INDICATED 1408

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

**FROM: ITASCA
TO : COMSAN FRANCISCO DIVN
INFO: COMHAWN SECTION**

**6008EARHART ONLY ACKNOWLEDGED
RECEIVING ITASCA SIGNALS ONCE AND DID NOT
ANSWER QUESTIONS AS TO POSITION COURSE SPEED
OR EXPECTED TIME ARRIVAL PERIOD EARHART USED
VOICE ENTIRELY STATIC INTERFERENCE HEAVY AND
ITASCA RECEPTION FRAGMENTARY IN EARLY HOURS
.....1945**

The ITASCA was covering an area along the probable earhart track when apparently reliable radio intercepts indicated that the Earhart plane was 281 miles north of Howland. The SWAN was approaching that vicinity enroute to Howland and was directed to conduct coordinated search with the ITASCA. The steamship MOORSBY also joined in the fruitless search of this area.

10. On 6 July, the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, was directed to take charge of all naval forces engaged in the search. The ITASCA was also directed by Coast Guard Headquarters to operate under the Commandant's authority. Accordingly, the Commanding Officer, USS COLORADO, then approaching the area, was directed to take charge of all vessels in the area and conduct a coordinated search until the arrival of Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two, when the latter would take over command.

11. The details of the search were left to the discretion of the Commanding Officer, USS COLORADO. The decision to search the quadrant southeast from Howland and the Phoenix Islands still appeared to be sound. The search was conducted as shown in the Commanding Officer, USS COLORADO, report, enclosure (B). No evidence of the flyers or their plane was found. However, by eliminating that quadrant, the LEXINGTON Group was later enabled to plan and execute a more practicable and more extensive search of the western semicircle from Howland.

12. In order to release the COLORADO at the earliest practicable date, it was decided that she should complete the search of the Phoenix Island and vicinity, then proceed to rendezvous with and fuel the LEXINGTON Group destroyers. This was done on 12 July and the COLORADO released from further duty in connection with the search. The result of her operations was definitely to establish that neither the plane nor its passengers were ashore in the Phoenix Group and therefore that they were not on any known land within 450 miles of Howland and that they were not afloat in the extensive areas searched by the ship and her three seaplanes. The duty was efficiently performed under

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

conditions of considerable hazard, due to the inadequacy of surveys of the waters traversed. During the period of his command of the searching force, the Commanding Officer of the COLORADO, Captain W. L. Friedell, exercised sound judgment and effective direction of the units at his disposal.

13. While the LEXINGTON Group was fueling at Lahaina and Pearl Harbor, the Commandant held a conference with the Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two, the Commanding Officer of the LEXINGTON, and senior commanders in the District at which all available information and studies of the weather and probable location of the Earhart plane were made available to the LEXINGTON Group. The daily search plan for the LEXINGTON Group was submitted and accepted. The details of the studies and assumptions are included in those set forth in Commander, LEXINGTON Group report, enclosure (K), and are omitted from this report for the sake of brevity.

14. Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two, took over command of all units in the search area on 11 July and put into effect his search plan, based on the information available up to that time and subject to certain limitations of fuel and endurance of the vessels in his command. The LEXINGTON was required to complete the operation and return to the West Coast with the fuel on board. The ITASCA and SWAN could operate until 16 July and reach Honolulu without refueling. The destroyers could match the LEXINGTON's time limit. There was thus an absolute maximum of nine successive days for operations in the search area. Prudence dictated a reduction of this time to seven days' operations in order to provide a reserve. In order to insure an efficient search despite some anticipated bad weather, the Commandant directed that the plan provide for not more than seven days of searching and he subsequently directed that it terminate on 18 July, if good weather prevailed on 18 and 19 July, otherwise the search should end on 19 July. The Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two, accordingly laid out and executed his plan of search, as shown in his report attached.

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

15. The details of the plan and the reasons for its various provisions were sound and met with the full approval of the Commandant. The operation was well conceived and skillfully executed. It reflects great credit on the Search Commander, Captain J. S. Dowell, and on the commanding officers, officers, and crews of the vessels and plane squadrons under his command.

16. The performance of duty of the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Cutter ITASCA, Commander W. K. Thompson, U.S.C.G., has been commended by letter to his immediate superior. His intelligent and zealous conduct of the initial phase of the search under most trying conditions deserves especial commendation. His reports, together with the wholehearted cooperation of the Commander, Hawaiian Section, U. S. Coast Guard, were of great assistance to the subsequent conduct of operations by the Navy. The performance of the ITASCA was excellent in all respects throughout the flight and the search. Careful study of all communications and other information pertaining to the flight, and the preparations therefor, indicate clearly that the ITASCA left nothing undone to insure the safe completion of the Earhart flight.

17. The USS SWAN was the smallest vessel engaged in the search and the last to return to port. She was at sea for thirty-seven days during which she steamed approximately 7,000 miles. Despite the onerous operating conditions involving shortage of provisions and supplies, she carried out all assigned duties in a manner reflecting great credit on the commanding officer, Lieutenant H. F. MacComsey, the officers and crew. During her entire cruise there occurred no machinery failure nor a single sick day.

18. It is most gratifying that there occurred no serious injury to men or material in the very extensive and sometimes hazardous operations of ships and planes.

19. To Summarize briefly:

The initial phase of the search was based on the ITASCA's well reasoned belief that the plane was north of and fairly near Howland. A reasonably complete search of this area was made on 2-3 July. Then, on the strength of radio intercepts which appeared too reliable to be ignored, the search shifted to the westward and then 281 miles to northward of Howland. Both areas were searched without success and subsequent analysis discredits the radio intercepts on which this search was based.

The second phase of the search moved to the southeastern quadrant on the basis of radio intercepts and bearings and other considerations which indicated the plane was on land and probably in the Phoenix Islands. With this assumption

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

eliminated, the third phase was logically based on the assumption that the plane had landed in the water probably within two hundred miles of Howland and that the subsequent drift of wreck or boat would have moved well to the westward and north-westward in the 11 day interval prior to arrival of the LEXINGTON.

The LEXINGTON Group covered an area approximately 300 miles square to the west and northwest of Howland which included all probable positions of plane or passengers if afloat. As an additional but unlikely possibility the Gilbert Islands were searched. It is regrettably unreasonable to conclude other than that the unfortunate fliers were not above water upon conclusion of the search.

Miles steamed by vessels enroute to and during the search	48,000
Miles flown by planes	149,000
Plane hours in air	1,854
	44,000
Square miles searched:	
By vessels	94,800
By aircraft	167,481
TOTAL	<u>262,281</u>

20. Due to the geographic location of the search area and the composition of the force, certain features of the search were of outstanding interest:

The extensive weather and current data should prove a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the area.

It is believed that the plan used by the LEXINGTON and her squadrons is unique, and was particularly well designed for the management of widely separated forces and for communications concerning the operation.

The experience in false messages, interference, and confusion on critical frequencies indicates the need for some provision for authoritative control of such frequencies in emergency. Obviously, such realistic radio programs as the March of Time should not be broadcast when they may affect relief measures in progress.

If the Navy or the Coast Guard are to be involved in future private transoceanic flights, the licensing authority for such flights should be prevailed upon to require from the fliers a specific minimum performance in giving to those concerned reliable information prior to and during the progress of the flight.

Subject: Report of Earhart Search, 2-18 July, 1937.

21. It may be assumed that the Navy will be called upon to attempt rescue of crew and passengers of a transpacific clipper should one unfortunately be forced down at sea. Plans for coordinated rescue effort in the Hawaiian Area have been under consideration for the last several months. They provide for joint action by local agencies of the Navy, Coast Guard, and Pan-American Airways. The greater part of the transpacific air route is beyond the effective radius of local forces. Therefore, it would appear desirable to provide tentative plans for such rescue effort by units of the Fleet as may be anticipated.

22. Dispatches of particular interest are included in Enclosure (A); they were selected from a total of 385 dispatches concerning the search.

23. There are appended reports of the Commanding Officer U.S.C.G.C. ITASCA; Commanding Officer, USS COLORADO; and Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two, together with track charts of the vessels and planes participating in the search.

O. O. MURFIN.

Copies to:

Commander-in-Chief U.S. Fleet (2).
Comdr. Hawaiian Section, U.S. Coast Guard.
Comdr. Fleet Air Base, Pearl Harbor.

ENCLOSURE (A) DESPATCH FILE
8 July, 1937.

"FROM: ITASCA
TO : COMNAVBY
INFO: COMNAVBY

6002 KARIANT CONTACT 0742 REPORTED ONE HALF HOUR FUEL AND NO
LAND FALL POSITION DOUBTFUL CONTACT 0646 REPORTED APPROXIMATELY
ONE HUNDRED MILES FROM ITASCA BUT NO RELATIVE BEARING PERIOD
0043 REPORTED LINE OF POSITION 157 DASH 337 BUT NO REFERENCE
POINT PRESUME HOWLAND PERIOD ESTIMATE 1200 FOR MAXIMUM TIME
ALONG AND IF NONARRIVAL BY THAT TIME WILL COMMENCE SEARCH NORTH
WEST QUADRANT FROM HOWLAND AS MOST PROBABLE AREA PERIOD SEA
SMOOTH VISIBILITY FINE CEILING UNLIMITED PERIOD UNDERSTAND ONE
WILL FLOAT FOR LIMITED TIME 1015"

"FROM: ITASCA
TO : COMNAVBY
INFO: HAWKING

6002 KARIANT UNREPORTED HOWLAND AT 1200 BELIEVE DOWN SHORTLY
AFTER 0915 AM SEARCHING PROBABLE AREA AND WILL CONTINUE 1215"

"FROM: ITASCA
TO : COMNAVBY
INFO: COMNAVBY

6002 YOUR 6002 1401 WE HAVE HAD NO POSITIONS COMMA SPEEDS COMMA
OR COURSES FROM KARIANT PLANE EXCEPT NO CALLED LINE OF POSITION
AT 0043 WHICH HAD NO REFERENCE POINT PERIOD (2) GAVE US NONE OF
HER BEARINGS PERIOD BELIEVE SHE PASSED TO NORTH AND WEST OF ISLAND
ABOUT 0800 AND REMED IT IN THE CLASH OF RISING SUN THOUGH WE WERE
SMOKING HEAVILY AT THAT TIME PERIOD JUDGE SHE CAME DOWN BETWEEN
337 AND 90 FROM HOWLAND AND WITHIN 100 MILES PERIOD HAVE BROADCAST
AS INDICATED 1402"

"FROM: COMNAVBY
TO : OPNAV
INFO: COMNAVBY; COMFOURTH; CINCPAC.

WENT AIR BASE IS PREPARED DESPATCH ONE PDY PLANE HOWLAND
ISLAND TO ASSIST KARIANT SEARCH DEPARTING ABOUT EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
TODAY FRIDAY ITASCA AT HOWLAND FIFTEEN HUNDRED GALLONS AVIATION
GASOLINE ON HOWLAND ISLAND TEN THOUSAND GALLONS ON SWAN MIDWAY
BETWEEN FRANK HARBOR AND HOWLAND PERIOD PLANE OPERATION AT HOWLAND
MUST BE CONDUCTED IN OPEN SEA ON ONE SIDE OF ISLAND NO ANCHORAGE
FOR AIRCRAFT ON TRIP RETURN TRIP CAN NOT BE MADE WITHOUT RE-
FUELING INVOLVING POSSIBILITY PLANE MAY BE FORCED TO LAND HOWLAND
ISLAND UNDER UNFAIR SEA CONDITIONS OPERATIONS THERE FEASIBLE
ONLY DURING EXCELLENT WEATHER CONDITIONS PERIOD PRESENT WEATHER
FORECAST IS FOR CONTINUED FAIR WEATHER VICINITY HOWLAND ISLAND
FOR NEXT FOUR DAYS PERIOD NOT PRACTICABLE TO SEND MORE THAN ONE
PLANE BECAUSE ONLY ONE CAN BE TENDED AT HOWLAND PERIOD NAVIGA-
TIONAL AND OTHER DANGERS OF THIS LONG FLIGHT APPARENT PERIOD
ADVISE 1515

2 July (Continued)

*FROM: NAVY DEPT
TO : COMFOURTEEN
INFO: CINCUS; COMAIRBASEFOR; FAD PH; COMDT USCG WASHN.

0002 USE AVAILABLE NAVAL FACILITIES TO CONDUCT SUCH SEARCH FOR MISS EARHART IN YOUR OPINION IS PRACTICABLE 1940"

*FROM: OPNAV
TO : COMBATTOR
INFO: CINCUS; COMAIRBASEFOR; COMFOURTEEN.

1002 COMBATTOR 1515 SLANT TWO COM FOURTEEN WILL COORDINATE SEARCH OPERATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH OPNAV 0002 1940 2300"

*FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : NAVY DEPT
INFO: CINCUS; COMAIRBASEFOR; FAD PH; COMDT USCG WASHN; COMBATTOR.

0002 NO PRACTICABLE FACILITIES AVAILABLE THIS DISTRICT FOR SEARCH HOWLAND ISLAND EXHIBIT PATROL PLANES THE ADVISABILITY OF SENDING WHICH HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT BY SOFA COLORADO AT PRESENT IN HONOLULU ON ROTC CRUISE IF SHE CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR DISPATCH TO HOWLAND ISLAND HER PLANES WOULD BE OF GREAT VALUE IMMEDIATE DISPATCH REPLY REQUESTED 1700"

3 July, 1937

*FROM: NAVY DEPT
TO : COMFOURTEEN
INFO: CINCUS; COMAIRBASEFOR; COMBATTOR; COLORADO; COMDT USCG WASHN.

0003 IN REPLY YOUR DOUBLE ZERO ZERO TWO SEVENTEEN HUNDRED COLORADO IS MADE AVAILABLE 0112"

*FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : COLORADO
INFO: NAVY DEPT; CINCUS; COMAIRBASEFOR; COMBATTOR; COMDT USCG WASHN; FAD PH.

0002 COLORADO GET UNDERWAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH PLANES TO CONDUCT SEARCH FOR EARHART 2115"

*FROM: COMPATRONOF
TO : COMAIR FAD PH
INFO: SHAN; ITABGA.

2003 APPROXIMATE POSITION LAT 0635 LONG 1700 PERIOD LAST TWO HOURS IN EXTREMELY BAD WEATHER BETWEEN ALTITUDE 2000 AND 12000 FEET SHOW GLEET RAIN ELECTRICAL STORMS PERIOD IN DAYLIGHT CONDITIONS LOOK EQUALLY BAD CLOUD TOPS APPEAR TO BE 12000 FEET OR MORE PERIOD AM RETURNING TO PEARL HARBOR NOW HAVE 900 GALLONS FUEL ON BOARD 0710"

5 July (continued)

"FROM: OPNAV
TO : COM 14
INFO: COMBATTOR; COMAINTATTOR; CINCUS; COMAIRBASEFOR; FAB PH;
COLORADO.

1003 REPORT PRACTICABILITY OF CONDUCTING SEARCH WITH PATROL PLANES FROM JOHNSTON ISLAND SERVICING PLANES THERE WITH GASOLINE CARRIED BY DESTROYERS AND AIRCRAFT TENDERS 1012"

"FROM: COM FOURTEEN
TO : OPNAV
INFO: COMBATTOR; COMAINTATTOR; CINCUS; COMAIRBASEFOR; FAB PH;
COLORADO.

1003 YOUR 1003 1012 OPERATIONS OF PLANES FROM JOHNSTON ISLAND NOT CONSIDERED PRACTICABLE ABOUT 2000 MILES FOR ROUND TRIP TO CENTER SEARCH AREA WOULD LEAVE COMPARATIVELY SHORT PERIOD FOR SEARCH PLANES FROM COLORADO SHOULD BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH AS MUCH PLANES IN JOHNSTON LAGOON SERVICED FROM TENDERS OUTSIDE THIS MOST DIFFICULT UNDER FREQUENT SEA CONDITIONS PERIOD IF MORE EXTENSIVE SEARCH OPERATIONS ARE CONTEMPLATED DISPATCH OF AIRCRAFT CARRIER MOST PRACTICABLE EFFICIENT METHOD PERIOD A MESSAGE FROM THE PATROL PLANE ENROUTE TO HOWLAND ISLAND JUST RECEIVED AS FOLLOWS QUOTE 2003 APPROXIMATE POSITION LAT 0035 LONG 7800 PERIOD LAST TWO HOURS IN EXTREMELY (100) BAD WEATHER BETWEEN ALTITUDE 2000 AND 12000 FEET SNOW SLEET RAIN ELECTRICAL STORMS PERIOD IN DAYLIGHT CONDITIONS LOOK EQUALLY BAD CLOUD TOPS APPEAR TO BE 16000 FEET OR MORE PERIOD AM RETURNING TO PEARLHARBOR NOW HAVE 900 GALLONS FUEL ON BOARD 0710 UNQUOTE 0958"

4 July, 1937

"FROM: COMAINTATTOR
TO : LEXINGTON
INFO: COMBATTOR; CINCUS; OPNAV; COMDESRON 2; COMFOURTEEN.

0004 LEXINGTON DESIGNATED UNIT OF LEXINGTON GROUP WITH LAMSON CUSHING PERKINS DRAYTON UNDER COMDESRON TWO TO SEARCH FOR EARLIEST PLANE WHEN READY TO PROCEED REPORT COMDESRON TWO FOR DUTY 1205"

"FROM: OPNAV
TO : CINCUS
INFO: COMDESRONFOR; COMB TFOR; COMAINTATTOR; COMAIRBASEFOR; CINCAF;
COMBATTOR; FABPH; COLORADO; LEXINGTON; ITASCA; COMFANDIV;
COMDT USCG; COMAIDBEG; COMFOURTEEN.

0004 WHEN LEXINGTON GROUP IS IN ALL RESPECTS READY PROCEED TO ASSIST IN SEARCH FOR EARLIEST PLANE COOPERATE WITH COMFOURTEEN COLORADO AND ITASCA 1200"

4 July (continued)

FROM: ITAGCA
TO: COMDT USCG WAREH

6004 YOUR 6004 1909 FOR SECRETARY MORCAUTIAU HAVE SEARCHED AREA NORTHWEST TO NORTHEAST OF HOWLAND ISLAND RADIUS 180 MILES WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS THOUGH VISIBILITY WEATHER AND SEA CONDITIONS EXCELLENT PERIOD EXTRA AND VIOLENT 10 KNOTS POSTED AND CONTINUAL USE BOTH HIGH POWERED SEARCHLIGHTS DURING DARKNESS PERIOD AM REASONABLY CERTAIN PARTY IS NOT AFOAT IN AREA INDICATED PERIOD COMENCED RECTANGULAR SEARCH THIS MORNING AT DAYBREAK 180 MERIDIAN TO HOWLAND ISLAND BETWEEN LATITUDE ZERO TWO ZERO NORTH AND ONE THREE ZERO NORTH PERIOD ESTIMATE ORIGIN THIS SEARCH WELL TO WESTWARD AND LEeward OF PLANE POSITION IN PLANK DOWN WEST OF ISLAND PERIOD PRESENT CURRENT SETTING WEST ONE HALF KNOTS WIND ESTIMATED ONE KNOT WEST PERIOD WEATHER OVERCAST VISIBILITY EXCELLENT SEA VERY MODERATE AND FAVORABLE PERIOD WILL HAVE COVERED INDICATED AREA TO HOWLAND BY TUESDAY EVENING 6 JULY PERIOD ESTIMATE SEARCHING THREE THOUSAND SQUARE MILES DAYLIGHT VISIBILITY AND ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED SQUARE MILES DURING NIGHT 1815"

FROM: COMNAVJAG 5 July, 1937
TO: ITAGCA

6005 FOLLOWING COPIED NAVY RADIO WAILUPE 1130 TO 1230 OCT QUOTE SEA NORTH HOWLAND CALL KILAQQ BEYOND NORTH DONT HOLD WITH US MUCH LONGER ABOVE WATER SHUT OFF UNQUOTE KEYED TRANSMISSION EXTREMELY POOR KEYING BEHIND CARRIER GRAMMATICAL PHRASES BUT COPIED BY THREE OPERATORS ORAM"

FROM: ITAGCA
TO: COMAIR FAD PH
INFO: COMNAVJAG; COM FOURTEEN

6005 REFERENCE COMAIR AIRCRAFT FAD PEARL HARBOR 1105 0632 SUGGEST YOU SWEEP WEST ON LATITUDE FIVE DEGREES THIRTY MINUTES NORTH 1035"

FROM: COMAIR FAD PH
TO: DEAN
INFO: COMNAVJAG; ITAGCA; COMFOURTEEN

1105 CONDUCT COORDINATED SEARCH AS INDICATED WITH ITAGCA 6005"

6 July, 1937

FROM: COMNAVJAG
TO: COMNAVJAG; ITAGCA; COM 14; COLORADO; COMDEGRONE;
COMDT USCG WAREH; COM 12

6006 FOLLOWING FROM PITHAM QUOTE PLEASE NOTE ALL RADIO BEARINGS THUS FAR OBTAINED ON EARLY PLANE APPROXIMATELY INTERSECT IN PHOENIX ISLAND REGION SOUTHEAST OF HOWLAND ISLAND PERIOD

6 July, 1937 (continued)

FURTHER LINE OF POSITION GIVEN BY NOCHAN IF BASED ON HOWLAND WHICH APPARENTLY REASONABLE ASSUMPTION ALSO PASSES THROUGH ISLANDS PERIOD BELIEVES NAVIGATOR AFTER OBTAINING SUCH LINE NATURALLY WOULD FOLLOW IT TO NEAREST INDICATED LAND PERIOD ADDITIONALLY IF MESSAGE STATING POSITION 201 MILES NORTH OF HOWLAND ACTUALLY WAS QUOTE SOUTH UNQUOTE INSTEAD OF NORTH ALSO INDICATES SAME REGION PERIOD WEATHER ANALYSIS INDICATES LIKELIHOOD HEADWINDS ALOFT MUCH STRONGER THAN NO MAN RECOGNED WITH PROBABILITY NEVER GOT 100 MILES FROM HOWLAND AS THEY THOUGHT PERIOD LOOKING ENGINEERS STATE POSITIVELY PLANE COULD NOT OPERATE ITS RADIO UNLESS ON SHORE AND NO ISLANDS APPARENTLY EXIST NORTH OF HOWLAND THEREFORE SUGGESTED THAT PLANES FROM COLORADO INVESTIGATE PHOENIX AREA AS PRACTICABLE UNQUOTE 0210"

"FROM: COLORADO
TO : OPHAV

1006 0000 POSITION LAT 0730 NORTH LONG 17055 WEST EXPECT BEGIN SEARCHING WITH PLANES TOMORROW WEDNESDAY SOUTHEAST OF HOWLAND ISLAND 0515"

"FROM: OPHAV
TO : COLORADO; COMDESRON2; COM 14
INFO: COMBATSHIP3; COMSUBFOR; COMBATFOR; COMSCOFOR; COMAIRBATFOR;
COMBATFOR; COMAIRBATFOR; COMBATFOR; COMSUBRON4; FAB PH; OPHAV.

0106 COM FOURTEEN HAS BEEN DESIGNATED TAKE CHARGE OF SEARCH FOR EARHART PLANE PERIOD ALL UNIT OF FLEET BASED PEARL HARBOR PLUS LEXINGTON GROUP AND COLORADO ARE UNDER COMMAND OF COM FOURTEEN FOR SEARCH OPERATIONS 1225"

"FROM: COMFRANDIV
TO : COMNAVJAG
INFO: ITAGCA; COM FOURTEEN

6006 ON ACCOUNT OF PREPONDERANCE OF NAVAL CRAFT TO BE ENGAGED IN EARHART SEARCH AND NECESSITY FOR COORDINATION HEADQUARTERS HAS AUTHORIZED THAT ITAGCA REPORT TO COMMANDANT FOURTEENTH NAVAL DISTRICT FOR DUTY PERIOD DIRECT ITAGCA ACCORDINGLY 1445"

"FROM: COM FOURTEEN
TO : COLORADO
INFO: COMDESRON2; SWAN; FAB; COMNAVBG; ITAGCA; NAVSTA TUTUILA;
COMBATFOR; TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED BY SWAN; COLORADO; ITAGCA.

0006 TAKE CHARGE OF NAVAL AND COAST GUARD UNITS IN SEARCH AREA AND DIRECT AND COORDINATE EARHART SEARCH UNTIL ARRIVAL COMDESRON TWO WITH LEXINGTON GROUP WHO WILL THEN BE DIRECTED TO TAKE CHARGE STOP KEEP COMFOURTEEN ADVISED OF PROGRESS STOP WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED ANY PRE-IDENT INFORMATION RECEIVED BY COMFOURTEEN NAVDIST PEARL HARBOR 1800"

6 July, 1957 (continued)

"FROM: ITASCA
TO : COM 14
INFO: COLORADO; COMDEIRONB; COMSEANEC; COMFRANDIV.

0006 REPORT FOR DUTY AS PER INSTRUCTIONS COAST GUARD 1525"

"FROM: COMDEIRONB
TO : COM 14
INFO: COMDEIRONFOR; COMBATFOR; COMSECOFOR; COMAIRBATFOR; CIRCUS;
OPNAV; COLORADO.

0006 CIRCUS 0100 1225 LEXINGTON GROUP REPORT FOR DUTY NOON ZONE
PLUS NINE POSITION TODAY TUESDAY TWENTY EIGHT FORTY NORTH ONE
HUNDRED THIRTY SEVEN DEGREES SEVEN MINUTES WEST COURSE TWO FIVE
ZERO SPEED TWENTY THREE 1525"

"FROM: COLORADO
TO : COMFOURTEEN
INFO: SWAN; ITASCA; COMDEIRONB

1006 CIRCUS 0100 1225 REPORT FOR DUTY PERIOD PLAN TO FUEL ITASCA
SEVEN JULY THEN BY PLANE INSPECT WINSLOW REEF THEN EACH ISLAND
PHOENIX ISLANDS INCLUDING CAR HOLEY REEF 1525"

"FROM: SWAN
TO : COMFOURTEEN

1006 YOUR 0006 1505 1600"

"FROM: COLORADO
TO : SWAN
INFO: COMFOURTEEN

1006 PROCEED TOWARDS POSITION LAT ZERO LONGITUDE ONE SEVEN FIVE
WEST SPEED EIGHT KNOTS 1605"

7 July, 1957

"FROM: COLORADO
TO : ITASCA
INFO: SWAN; COMDEIRONB; COM 14

1007 DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS CONDUCT SEARCH AT FIFTEEN KNOTS TO THE
EASTWARD AND SOUTHWARD OF ORIGIN LAT ZERO TWENTY SOUTH LONG ONE
HUNDRED SEVENTY EIGHT WEST PERIOD WESTERN BOUNDARY LINE BEARING
ONE FIVE SEVEN DEGREES TRUE FROM ORIGIN EASTERN BOUNDARY ONE
HUNDRED AND TWENTY MILES TO THE EASTWARD OF WESTERN BOUNDARY PERIOD
ALLOW FOR CURRENTS EXPERIENCED BY YOU RECENTLY WHICH WILL DEVELOPE
A SHIFTING SECTOR 1022"

7 July, 1937 (continued)

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : COLORADO
INFO: BARHART 3 ARCH GROUP

0007 FORWARD SUBMARTY SEARCH OPERATIONS AT 0730 and 1930 ZONE 10
POINT 5 TEAM DAILY ESPECIALLY DESIGN AREA COVERED AND UNITS EMPLOYED
AND PROJECTED OPERATIONS SUCCEEDING TWELVE HOURS PERIOD ANY INFOR-
MATION OF SPECIAL INTEREST OR IMPORTANCE TO BE FORWARDED AT ONCE
1440"

"FROM: NAVY DEPT
TO : COMFOURTEEN
INFO: COMBATON; CINQUE; COMTWELVE; COLORADO; COMTHIRTEEN;
COMDESECHON.

0007 SUBMIT DAILY REPORT PROGRESS BARHART SEARCH IN VIEW COLORADO
SCHEDULE DESIGN RELEASE THAT VISUAL AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE RECOM-
MENDATION DESIRED 1612"

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPNAV
INFO: BARHART SEARCH GROUP; CINQUE

0007 OPNAV 0007 1612 ITASCA ON 2 AND 3 JULY SEARCHED AREA BETWEEN
RADI 320 AND 040 FROM HOWLAND TO DISTANCE 120 MILES AND REASONABLY
CERTAIN SEARCH WAS EFFICIENT ON 4 JULY SEARCHED AREA FOURTEEN MILE
FRONT LAT 0200 NORTH LONG 177 WEST TO LAT 0130 NORTH LONG 100 WEST
AND RECTANGLE BOUNDED BY LATS 0030 NORTH AND 0130 NORTH AND 100 AND
170 WEST PERIOD ON 5 JULY FOURTEEN MILE FRONT FROM LAT 0300 NORTH
LONG 173 30 WEST TO LAT 02 30 NORTH LONG 170 WEST THENCE TO POINT
201 MILLER NORTH OF HOWLAND PERIOD SEARCHED THAT VICINITY DURING
NIGHT PERIOD ON 6 JULY SEARCHED FROM LAT 02 30 NORTH LONG 176 WEST
TO LAT 02 00 NORTH LONG 174 WEST PERIOD SWAN SEARCHED AREA BOUNDED
LAT 05 20 NORTH DASH 05 35 NORTH LONG 172 WEST DASH 176 WEST PERIOD
COLORADO FUELING ITASCA TODAY FOLLOWING WHICH ITASCA AND COLORADO
WILL SEARCH SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST OF HOWLAND RESPECTIVELY PERIOD
SWAN SEARCHING ENROUTE JOIN COLORADO 1615"

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPNAV

0008 AFTERNOON SEVENTH COLORADO SEARCHED WITH PLANES ON COURSE ONE
NINE FIVE TOWARD REEF AND SAND BARRS NORTH OF WINGLOW REEF WILL
CONTINUE SEARCH TODAY IN VICINITY THIS REEF AND ISLANDS IN PHOENIX
GROUP PERIOD ITASCA PROCEEDED TO POINT LAT ZERO TWENTYSOUTH LONG
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY EIGHT WEST DESIGNATED POINT BAKEN AND TODAY
WILL SEARCH AREA TO SOUTH AND EAST THIS POINT PERIOD SWAN CONTINU-
ING SEARCH TOWARD POINT LAT ZERO LONG ONE SEVEN FIVE WEST DESIG-
NATED POINT AFFIRM PERIOD NOTHING DEVELOPED"

9 July, 1937

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OTRAY

0009 ITASCA CONTINUED SEARCH TO SOUTHWARD AND EASTWARD FROM POINT BAKER SWAN ARRIVED POINT AFFIRM AND CONTINUED TOWARD LAT TWO SOUTH ONE SEVEN TWO WEST DESIGNATED POINT EAST COLORADO PLANES SEARCHED VICINITY WHEELON REEF WHICH WAS NOT SEEN AND THEN TO SOUTHWARD ON COURSE ONE SIX TWO ON SEVENTY MILE FRONT FOR DISTANCE FIFTY MILES PERIOD TODAY SWAN WILL CONTINUE TOWARD POINT EAST SEARCHING VICINITY GANTON ISLAND ENROUTE AND WILL BE FUELED BY COLORADO SATURDAY PERIOD ITASCA CONTINUING SEARCH IN SAME AREA AS YESTERDAY COLORADO PLANES CONTINUING EXAMINATION PHOENIX GROUP 0051"

"FROM: MOVEMENT REPORT HONOLULU
TO : ALL US MEN OF WAR; US NAV. RDO STA.

1709 54 PEARL DEPARTURES FROM LAINAHAROAD. COMMISSION TWO IN LEXINGTON. COMMISSION THREE IN DRAYTON LAMSON CUSHING FOR SEARCH AREA HAKAPO WHIPPOORWILL WITH LIGHTER 479 FOR PEARL HARBOR 1830"

"FROM: MOVEMENT REPORT OFFICE HONOLULU
TO : ALL US MEN OF WAR; US NAV. RDO STA.

1709 54 PEARL ARRIVAL AT TUTUELA ONTARIO 2030"

10 July, 1937

"FROM: ODR 2
TO : COLORADO
INFO: ODDS; CUSHING; LAMSON; DRAYTON; LEXINGTON; COM 14

0010 COMFOURTEEN 0010 1005 IN ORDER NOT TO MATERIALLY INTERFERE WITH LEXINGTON PLANS RECOMMEND COLORADO REDEVELOP AND FUEL DESTROYING IN LAT FIVE DEGREES FIFTY MINUTES NORTH LONGITUDE ONE SEVENTY THREE DEGREES FIFTEEN MINUTES WEST AT ZERO SEVEN HUNDRED PLUS ELEVEN ONE HALF TIME MONDAY TWELFTH PERIOD PLEASE EXPEDITE REPLY 1045"

"FROM: COLORADO
TO : COMMISSION 2
INFO: ODDS; LAMSON; CUSHING; DRAYTON; LEXINGTON; COMFOURTEEN

1010 YOUR 0010 1045 AFFIRMATIVE 1000"

"FROM: COLORADO
TO : COMFOURTEEN
INFO: AIRLANT SEARCH GROUP

1010 COLORADO AT 0700 LAT 0351 SOUTH LONG 178 15 WEST LAUNCHED PLANES SEARCHED HILKEY PHOENIX KENDRICK BIRNIE IN ORDER NAMED AT

10 July, 1937 (continued)

0000 LAT 0351 LONG 172 05 COURSE NORTH AT 1015 LAT 0322 LONG 172 05
RECOVERED PLANE COURSE 100 AT 1200 LAT 0323 LONG 171 05 COMMENCED
FUELLING SHAN AT 1410 LAT 0325 LONG 171 45 COMPLETED FUELLING COURSE
NORTH AT 1445 LAT 03 22 LONG 171 45 CATAPULTED PLANE3 MARCH CANTON
ISLAND AT 1600 RECOVERED LAT 03 06 LONG 171 43 SET COURSE 350
FOR RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTROYERS IN LAT 0850 NORTH LONG 173 15 WEST
0700 MONDAY TWELFTH PERIOD WITH COMPLETION FLIGHT THIS AFTERNOON
ALL ISLANDS PHOENIX GROUP HAVE BEEN LOCATED AND CAREFULLY SEARCHED
FOR ANY SIGN OF BARIART PLANE OR INHABITANTS WITH EXCEPTION WINSLOW
REEF AND SANDHANK AND REEF TO THE NORTHWARD THE CHARTED POSITION
OF THESE PLANE AND FOR SEVERAL MILES IN VICINITY WAS COVERED TWICE
WITHOUT LOCATING THEM PERIOD SHAN UPON COMPLETION FUELLING WAS
DIRECTED PROCEED POINT AFIRM PERIOD ITASCA CONTINUING SEARCH
ASSIGNED SECTOR TWELVE HUNDRED POSITION LAT 01 20 LONG 177 36
SEARCHING TODAY TO WESTWARD 1830"

"FROM: COMDESRON 2
TO : COMFOURTEEN
INFO: COMFLADIV 3; LAMSON; BRAYTON; CUSHING; LEXINGTON

0010 PRESENT INTENTION MAKE SEARCH PLAN NUMBER TWO EFFECTIVE
TUESDAY THIRTEENTH WILL COVER MAXIMUM AREA IMMEDIATE VICINITY
HOLLAND ISLAND THEREAFTER USE PLAN NUMBER ONE EXTENDING TO WESTWARD
WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED IN DETAIL AS SEARCH PROGRESSES 1930 PLUS TEN
HALF POSITION FOURTEEN FIFTY EIGHT NORTH ONE SIXTY TWO FIFTY FIVE
WEST 2030"

11 July, 1937

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPNAV

0011 COLORADO COMPLETED SEARCH PHOENIX GROUP AREA AND ALL ISLANDS
THEREIN IS NOW HEADING FOR RENDEZVOUS LAT 0850 NORTH LONG 173 15
WEST TO FUEL DESTROYERS LEXINGTON GROUP FORENOON MONDAY TWELFTH
UPON COMPLETION OF WHICH COLORADO WILL BE RELEASED FROM SEARCH
DUTY AND DIRECTED PROCEED ON PREVIOUSLY ASSIGNED DUTY ON FOLLOWING
ITINERARY FUEL PEARL HARBOR SEVENTEENTH DEBARK WASHINGTON ROTC AND
NAVAL BASE VES SEATTLE TWENTY SIXTH PERIOD SHAN FUELED AND DIRECTED
PROCEED POINT AFIRM ITASCA CONTINUING SEARCH HER ASSIGNED AREA
WHICH SHE HAS COMPLETED TO LAT 0147 SOUTH 0920"

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : COLORADO; COMDESRON 2
INFO: BARIART SEARCH GROUP

0011 COMDESRONS TAKE CHARGE ALL UNITS IN SEARCH AREA PERIOD SEARCH
OF PHOENIX GROUP AREA CONSIDERED COMPLETED PERIOD UPON COMPLETION
FUELLING DESTROYERS COLORADO RELEASED SEARCH DUTY AND PROCEED PRE-
VIOUSLY ASSIGNED DUTIES FOLLOWING ITINERARY SUBMITTED COLORADO
DESPATCH THE NINTH 0943"

A

12 July, 1957.

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPHAV

0012 DESTROYER LEXINGTON GROUP TO FUEL FROM COLORADO THIS FORENOON
LEXINGTON GROUP TO START SEARCH MORNING THIRTEENTH FROM POINT ORIGIN
LAT 0230 NORTH LONG 177 WEST BASE COURSE SOUTH SWAN AND ITASCA
PROCEEDING TOWARD SOUTHERN ISLANDS GILBERT GROUP 0935"

13 July, 1957.

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPHAV

0013 LEXINGTON COMMENCING SEARCH THIS MORNING PERIOD WEATHER
PERMITTING EXPECTS IN FIVE DAYS TO COVER AREA BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS
LATITUDE 3 DEGREES NORTH TO APPROXIMATELY 2 DEGREES SOUTH LONGI-
TITUDE 175 30 WEST TO 175 30 EAST PERIOD ITASCA ARRIVING ARONAI
ISLAND THIS MORNING TO BEGIN SEARCH OF GILBERTS SEAN ENROUTE TO
ASSIST WITH GILBERT SEARCH PERIOD COLORADO ARRIVES OFF PEARLHARBOR
SIXTEENTH FOR RE-MAIL AND STORES THEN PROCEED SAN FRANCISCO WILL NOT
REQUIRE FUEL PEARLHARBOR 0940"

14 July, 1957

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPHAV

0014 ITASCA SEARCHED AROUND TAIANA AND VICINITY SWAN TO SEARCH
VICINITY KURUNA TODAY BOTH VESSELS TO CAREFULLY SEARCH UNINHABITED
ISLANDS IN AREAS ASSIGNED THEM AND SUCH SEARCH AS DEEMED ESSENTIAL
OF INHABITED ISLANDS LEXINGTON CONTINUING AS OUTLINED IN YESTERDAYS
REPORT DAYS WORK INTERFERED WITH BY HEAVY RAIN SQUALL BUT CON-
SIDERED SATISFACTORY TODAY'S POINT OF ORIGIN LAT 01 30 SOUTH LONG
160 BASE COURSE NORTH 0930"

15 July, 1957.

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPHAV

0015 SWAN AND ITASCA CONTINUING SEARCH GILBERTS EXPECT TO RELEASE
THEIR FIRST AREA COMPLETED PROBABLY SATURDAY LEXINGTON CONTINUING
SEARCH AREA PREVIOUSLY REPORTED TODAY'S POINT ORIGIN LAT 0120 NORTH
LONG 160 BASE COURSE NORTH PERIOD PLAN BEING FOLLOWED 62 PLANES
FIRST DAY 42 THEREAFTER PLANES DIVIDED EQUALLY EACH FLANK SPACED
2 MILES SEARCH OUT FROM FLANKS 90 MILES 2 FLIGHTS PER DAY ADVANCING
FRONT 240 MILES FIRST DAY 160 THEREAFTER 100"

16 July, 1957.

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPHAV

16 July, 1957 (continued)

0016 ITASCA COMPLETED SEARCH NORTHERN GILBERTS SWAN CONTINUING
SOUTHERN GILBERTS LEXINGTON COMPLETED AS SCHEDULED FOR YESTERDAY
TODAY STARTS FROM LAT 0400 NORTH LONG ONE SEVEN EIGHT EAST FIRST
BASE COURSE WEST 0957"

17 July, 1957.

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPNAV

0017 SWAN COMPLETED SEARCH SOUTHERN GILBERTS HAS BEEN RELIEVED
FURTHER SEARCH DUTY NOW PROCEEDING PEARL HARBOR ITASCA RELIEVED
SEARCH DUTIES DIRECTED REPORT HAWAIIAN SECTION COAST GUARD NOW
PROCEEDING HOWLAND PERIOD LEXINGTON YESTERDAY COMPLETED FOLLOWING
AREA LATS 0830 AND 0830 NORTH LONGS 178 20 and 178 45 EAST TODAY'S
PLAN POINT OF ORIGIN LAT 0100 NORTH LONG 178 36 EAST BASE COURSE
EAST 1000"

18 July, 1957.

"FROM: COMFOURTEEN
TO : OPNAV

0018 YESTERDAY SEARCH COMPLETED AS SCHEDULED PERIOD TODAY CLEANING
UP BATH HOUSES IN AREAS SEARCHED FOURTEENTH FIFTEENTH SIXTEENTH
AND PROBABLY FILL IN AREAS TO NORTHEAST OF BASE 0920"

"FROM: COMSEVEN
TO : COM 14

0019 SEARCH TODAY SUNDAY COMPLETED AS SCHEDULED 1851"

*This file includes only the
more important despatches
exclusive of confidential ones.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT
UNITED STATES COAST GUARDHonolulu, T. H.,
29 July, 1937.

ITASCA

From: Commanding Officer, ITASCA.
To : Commandant, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
(Via Commander, Hawaiian Section.)

Subject: Earhart Flight.

1. The following report is submitted herewith for your information:

19 to 23 June, 1937:

Enroute to Howland Island. 2056, on the 23rd raised Howland Island bearing 90 degrees true, distance 7 miles, stopped and drifted to the westward of the island awaiting daybreak.

24 June, 1937:

0718, closed island, stopped and drifted. Lowered boats and commenced landing stores and equipment together with gasoline and equipment for Earhart flight. Completed landing of stores and equipment at Howland Island this date and drifted during night on the lee side of the island.

25 June, 1937:

Proceeded to Baker Island where hove to at 0847 and commenced landing stores for that island which duty was completed at 1403.

26 to 30 June, 1937:

Holding position off and on lee side of Howland Island awaiting arrival of Amelia Earhart plane from Lae, New Guinea. During this period Department of Interior personnel and technical aides at work on runways and precautionary efforts connected with Earhart flight. Organized task groups for landing and take off duties.

1 July, 1937:

1858, received verification from San Francisco Division that Amelia Earhart Putnam had departed Lae, New Guinea at noon, Lae time, and was enroute to Howland.

2 July, 1937:

Made preparation during night for landing task groups in connection with plane flight. Vessel in contact with Earhart plane at 0245 and intermittently thereafter. Early reception poor. At 0610

801-84-800. 7/29/31.
ITASCA. Earhart Flight.

sent task group ashore to take stations for landing of plane. 0614 Earhart reported position 200 miles out of Howland. Commenced laying heavy smoke screen at daylight. 0645 Earhart plane reported position 100 miles out. 0742 plane reported apparently over the island and gas running low but no land fall. 0758, plane reported circling and requested transmission on 7500 kcs for bearings. 0800, plane reported reception of our signals but unable to obtain a minimum for bearing. 0843, plane reported as being on line 157-337 and running north and south, no reference point given, reception excellent. 0900, signalled shore party to return to ship as by this time fears were felt that the Earhart plane had probably landed wide of the island. Landing party returned at 0912.

As soon as the plane had indicated that it was still aloft at 0843 and possibly on a line which would provide a land fall it was deemed advisable to retain homing position at Howland with the vessel for some time on the possibility that the plane might still come in.

At 1040, it was definitely assumed that the plane was down so got underway at full speed and commenced the search in the area which at that time seemed most logical.

During the last half hour prior to getting underway an estimate of the situation was made based upon the following facts and assumptions:

"FACTS"

(a) Flying conditions within a radius of 40 miles of Howland excellent, wind east 8 to 13 miles, ceiling unlimited, sea smooth.

(b) Visibility south and east of Howland excellent and unlimited as far as could be observed. Sun rising clear and bright and island, ship and smoke screen in the glare thereof.

(c) Visibility north and west of Howland excellent to horizon but beyond that continuous banks of heavy cumulus clouds.

(d) Plane transmissions had indicated flight through cloudy and overcast skies throughout the night and morning.

(e) Plane transmissions had indicated that dead reckoning distance had been accomplished.

(f) Plane signal strength high and unchanged during last hour of transmission.

(g) Plane's line (of position?) indicated dead reckoning run correct.

(h) Stellar navigating possibilities, south and east of Howland and close to Howland, were excellent throughout the night.

2 July, 1937 cont'd:

"ASSUMPTIONS"

- (a) That plane obtained no fix during latter part of flight due to visibility and assumed further this due to flying in cloudy weather and conditions which did not exist south and east of Howland but did exist north and west.
- (b) That line of position obtained was a "sun" line obtained when they emerged from the cloudy area north and west of Howland and presumably the only observation made during the latter part of the flight. Further assumed that this line was correct.
- (c) Assume that plane may have missed smoke screen, ship or island visually due to their lying in the glare of the rising sun.
- (d) Assumed further that plane passed within 200 miles of Howland Island and north of it.
- (e) Assumed that plane may have carried line of position found along line of flight for the period necessary for navigator to work and plot line of position not in excess of 100 miles.
- (f) Assume plane did not come down within a radius of 40 miles of Howland.

Upon foregoing facts and assumptions it was decided that the most logical area of search lay in a sector of a circle between 40 miles and 200 miles off of Howland Island and between bearings 337 and 45 true, from that island. Search was accordingly laid down in accordance with this estimate.

The following Department of Interior personnel were left on Howland in excess of normal personnel for the purpose of assisting the plane, if, by any chance, it neared the island during the absence of the ITASCA:

Ah Kin Leong; Albert K. Akana, Jr.; William Tavares;
Carl Kahalewai and Henry Lau.

Frank CIPRIANI, Radioman, second class, U.S.C.C. was left ashore in charge of high frequency radio direction apparatus to obtain bearings, if possible, on the plane. Searching throughout the day to the northward of Howland Island and during the night with searchlights. Extra lookouts posted and all hands on the alert. In addition to the efforts being made

601-64-300. 7/29/37.
ITASCA. Earhart Flight.

2 July, 1937 cont'd:

by the ITASCA, suggested to Commander, Hawaiian Section, the desirability of a Navy sea plane search from Pearl Harbor. Received information from the San Francisco Division that there was a possibility that the plane might use radio on the water and further that possibility of floating a considerable time excellent together with an emergency rubber boat and plenty of emergency rations carried.

At 2145 received definite instructions from Commandant, 14th Naval District, to be at Howland Island at daybreak Saturday, 3 July, 1937 to provide tender service for plane which had left Pearl Harbor at 1923. In view of the fact that the plane was already in the air enroute to Howland Island there was no alternative other than to abandon the search temporarily for the Earhart plane and proceed as indicated in the above noted orders; course was accordingly changed for Howland Island. Search was still maintained with searchlights.

3 July, 1937:

Arrived off Howland at 0710 in accordance with instructions. 0719, received information that Navy plane was turning back to base on account of extremely bad flying weather so resumed search to the northward which continued throughout the day. Received information from San Francisco Division that four separate radio stations at Los Angeles reported receiving Earhart position 178 with 1.6 in doubt. In view of possibilities of the plane being able to transmit on the water as indicated in prior information stood west to this latest reported position for the purpose of proving or disproving the reports which could not consistently be ignored. Maintained search throughout the day.

4 July, 1937:

Took up search during the 4th from 130th meridian towards Howland Island using rectangular search method and continued throughout the day and night.

5 July, 1937:

At 0242 received information from Hawaiian Section that Naval Radio Station Hailu had intercepted the following message; "281 NORTH HOWLAND CALL KHAQQ BEYOND NORTH DONT HOLD WITH US MUCH LONGER ABOVE WATER SHUT OFF. With the possibility of plane transmission on the water still existing stood north towards the position indicated in the foregoing intercept and advised all steamers in the vicinity of the possibility of the plane being down at that point. Contacted Howland Island in an endeavor to obtain a bearing from that point on the reported plane and report from Howland gave a bearing which conformed to the report. Searched to the northward enroute to reported position of plane. Arrived about dusk broadcasting on plane

B

601-64-300. 7/29/37.
ITASCA. Earhart Flight.

5 July, 1937 cont'd:

frequencies and using searchlights intermittently for visual signals. At 2100 lights which had the appearance of flares were sighted to the northward and stood up to investigate. These reported lights had every indication of a bursting green rocket but were finally determined to be attributed to meteorological shower which was reported both by the Howland Island Station and U.S.S. SWAN. At 2215 identified English steamer MOORSBY who had diverted from her normal course to assist in the search. Continued search throughout the night.

6 July, 1937:

Proceeded south and east during the night to effect rendezvous with U.S.S. COLORADO on the morning of the 7th for fuel purposes. At 1445 received instructions to report for duty to the Commandant, 14th Naval District, and reported as indicated. At 1545 received instructions from Commandant, 14th Naval District to report to U.S.S. COLORADO for duty and conformed.

7 July, 1937:

Contacted U.S.S. COLORADO at 0445. Closed her at 0633 and 0702 commenced taking fuel by destroyer method. Received from COLORADO commissary stores as requested. While fueling Commanding Officer conferred with Commanding Officer COLORADO relative to search program and the general situation up to-date. 1010 Completed fueling from the COLORADO, cast off and stood southward and westward for search area outlined in conference.

8 to 10 July, 1937:

Searched area south and west of Baker Island in accordance with orders of Commanding Officer U.S.S. COLORADO.

11 July, 1937:

0345 COMDESRON TWO in charge of search. Continued search as indicated in original orders. 2224 received instructions from COMDESRON TWO to proceed to ARORAI Island in the Gilbert Group and shaping course accordingly.

12 July, 1937:

Proceeding toward ARORAI Island, Lower Gilberts, to investigate that island and others as indicated in orders.

601-64-800. 7/29/37
ITASCA. Earhart Flight.

13 July, 1937:

Raised ARORAI Island at 0600 and stood off shore to await further instructions from Naval command. Received final instructions to visit certain islands of the Gilbert group at 0700 and stood for ARORAI. 0835 stopped off ARORAI Island, native canoe came alongside with native magistrate who came on board and conferred with Commanding Officer. 0950 landed two commissioned officers via native canoe with the permission and assistance of native Magistrate for the purpose of interrogating local inhabitants relative to the passage or wreckage of the Earhart plane. 1050 officers returned with negative reports on their efforts. 1402, underway proceeding to TAMAKA Island. 1513 hove to off TAMAKA Island. 1830 native canoe with native Magistrate came on board and departed with commissioned officers to interrogate local natives. 1714, duty officers returned with negative information. 1730, underway and stood to the northward and westward along the Gilbert chain.

14 July, 1937:

1322, stood in close to lee side NAUUKI Island but held no communication as no native boats came out and the surf breaking too heavily for surf boats unfamiliar with the locality. 1425, underway from NAUUKI Island to intercept two native canoes sighted. 1452, stopped alongside of native canoe but were unable to obtain information due to their inability to speak English. 1510, set course for KURIA Island where arrived at 1610 under the reef and drifted. Lowered surfboat and contacted native Magistrate who stated that the islands of this group were in close communication and that no information was available concerning any plane or wreckage. 1710, underway to the northward and westward, instructions having been modified regarding particular islands to search and the reporting of this vessel at TARAWA Island, the Division Headquarters, being deemed essential.

15 July, 1937:

0650, raised TARAWA Island and stood in to westward of reef. 0850, stopped and drifted off channel entrance. Dispatched Lieutenant Commander L. H. Baker and representative officers ashore in motor launch and motor surfboat to report the arrival of the ITASCA in the Gilberts officially and to explain the vessel's mission. At 1430 motor boats returned with following information: the senior Commissioner received the party graciously but declined to receive the visit as official owing to the fact that he had received no prior notice of the vessel's arrival in the Gilbert group. He requested the ITASCA to notify the Resident Commissioner at Ocean Island which latter report was accomplished by COMDESRON TWO. The Resident Commissioner at TARAWA Island stated that contact between the northern islands was close and that no information had been received of the passage of the Earhart plane or any wreckage therefrom. He further

B

601-64-800. 7/29/37
ITASCA. Earhart Flight.

15 July, 1937 cont'd:

stated that a definite lookout had been kept for the plane at his instructions since the flight. 1455, with all boats secured, set course toward the southward at standard speed. Advised COMDESRON TWO fully as regards the situation to-date and was directed to proceed to Howland Island for the purpose of picking up personnel and stores enroute to Honolulu.

16 July, 1937:

Enroute to Howland Island from the Gilberts. 1505, released from duty in search area by COMDESRON TWO and reported to Commandant, 14th Naval District. 1725, relieved from further search duty by Commandant, 14th Naval District and reported to Commander, Hawaiian Section. 1740 received orders to proceed to Honolulu, T. H.

W. K. THOMPSON
Commander, USCG.

HAWAIIAN SECTION 601-64-800 First Endorsement. Honolulu, T. H.,
29 July, 1937.

From: Commander, Hawaiian Section.
To : Commandant, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor.

1. Forwarded.

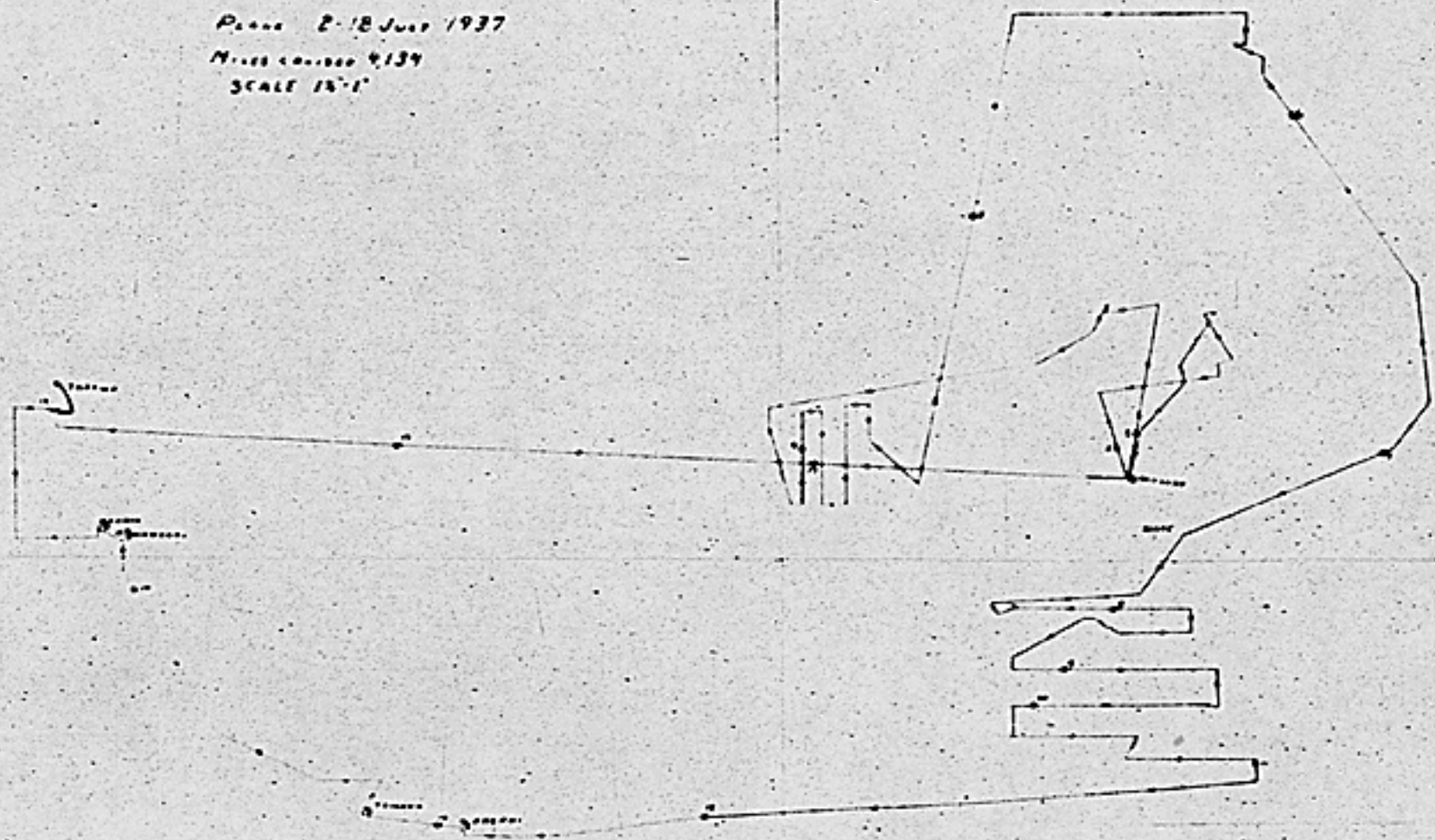
F. T. KENNER,
By direction.

ITASCA Search and Salvage

Plans 2-18 July 1937

Miss. No. 4139

SCALE 1/4" = 1'



Passage, Pearl Harbor, T. H.,
13 July, 1937.

From: Commanding Officer.
To : Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District.
Subject: Resume Earhart Search by the U.S.S. COLORADO.
(In Charge Search Group).

On 1 July, 1937, the U.S.S. COLORADO, Captain Wilhelm L. Friedell, U. S. Navy, Commanding, arrived at Honolulu, T. H. The U.S.S. COLORADO was operating in accordance with approved operating schedule on a one month's training cruise of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Students from the University of California, and Washington. Also on board were four distinguished guests of the Navy, Doctor Marion Luther Brittain, President of the Georgia School of Technology, Doctor Lee Paul Sieg, President of the University of Washington, Doctor Charles Berleth, Junior, Dean of the College of Engineering, University of California, and Doctor James Washington Bell, Professor of Money and Banking and Member of the Administrative Board of the Graduate School, Northwestern University. These distinguished guests of the Navy were all connected with schools that take an active part in the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Several officers and men of the Naval Reserve were aboard for training augmenting the regular ship's company of the U.S.S. COLORADO.

The U.S.S. Colorado had stopped at Hilo, Hawaii, for a pleasant welcome and a two day visit, had fired successfully, by the H.R.O.T.C. a modified Short Range Battle Practice in the Lahaina Area, and was berthed at Pier 2, Honolulu, T. H., to remain until early Tuesday Morning, 6 July, 1937.

On the morning of 1 July, 1937, (Honolulu Time) Mrs. Amelia Earhart Putnam, and her Navigator, Mr. Fred J. Noonan, took off from New Guinea for Howland Island in the Lockheed plane known as a flying laboratory in which they were approaching the end of a flight around the world. Howland Island is located in Latitude 0°-47' North, Longitude 176°-48' West. It is 1,600 miles from Honolulu, T. H., and is the nearest land to the Hawaiian Islands in the direction of the flight. It is an island two miles in length, and 1,000 yards wide. It is twenty feet high. South and east of Howland Island Latitude 0°-13' North, Longitude 176°-33' West is Baker Island also twenty feet high. It is one mile in length and 1,500 yards wide.

D

On Howland Island there are four weather observers, from Honolulu equipped with a direction finder for this flight, and a radio for communication with the Honolulu Radio Station, and the Coast Guard Cutter ITASCA. On Baker Island are four observers from Honolulu also equipped with a radio.

The ITASCA, under the Command of Commander W. G. Thompson, United States Coast Guard, had been placed on station near the island for the purpose of guarding the flight. The ITASCA had come from the West Coast for this purpose. The ITASCA had previously been stationed at Honolulu, and the personnel were familiar with the waters and islands of the vicinity.

About noon, Friday, 2 July, 1937, word was received in Honolulu that the Earhart Plane had not arrived at Howland Island. The ITASCA reported that 0742 (Zone plus 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ time) the Earhart Plane had been contacted, and the plane reported only one-half hour of fuel, no land fall and position doubtful. The contact at 0846 had reported one hundred miles from the ITASCA then at Howland Island, but no relative bearing was given. At 0943, the plane reported line of position 157-337 but no reference point. The ITASCA further reported that at 1200 she would commence search to the northwestward for the plane.

The ITASCA reported later that she had received no word as to the course and speed or position of the plane but believed that the plane was down to the northwest, having passed Howland Island, and due to the glare of the rising sun had missed seeing Howland Island or the ITASCA which had been smoking heavily in order to assist in being sighted.

The reason for the ITASCA's search to the northwestward was not known until contact with the ITASCA was made several days later and information was then received that on the morning of 2 July, 1937, at Howland the visibility had been clear except to the west and north, and if the plane had been close to Howland it was believed the island or the ITASCA would have been easily seen except from the northwest.

Inquiries from the Navy Department to the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, as to the practicability of searching by destroyers and planes from Pearl Harbor, T. H., brought out the fact that the position of Howland Island, 1,600 miles from Honolulu precluded any searching of that area being conducted without a base in the immediate vicinity for either destroyers or planes.

In the afternoon of 2 July, Lieutenant Warren E. Harvey, U.S. Navy, in a seaplane took off from Pearl Harbor, T.H., for search in the vicinity of the Howland Island for the Earhart plane.

The U.S.S. COLORADO was made available to the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, for use as a searching vessel. At 0500, Saturday, 3 July, 1937, the U.S.S. COLORADO left Honolulu for Pearl Harbor, with orders to fuel prior to departing for the Search Area. While at Pearl Harbor additional stores of gasoline, lubricating oil and aviation oil, were taken on board.

At 0700, the Patrol Plane reported her position at Latitude 8°-35' North, Longitude 172°-00' West, that the weather was extremely bad and that it was necessary for her to return to Pearl Harbor.

The U.S.S. SWAN had been despatched from the Fleet Air Base, Pearl Harbor, T.H., with supplies for the Navy plane in the event that it reached Howland Island and conducted a search from there. In order to guard the Patrol Plane on its return flight to Pearl Harbor, the U.S.S. PENT, TALBOT, TANSAGER, and WHIPPOORWILL were ordered out to cover the path of the Navy Plane. This plane returned to Honolulu safely by 1900, Saturday, 3 July 1937, and no further planes were despatched from Pearl Harbor for the Search Area. The four ships were directed to return to Pearl Harbor. The U.S.S. SWAN continued on towards Howland Island.

While at Pearl Harbor the Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. COLORADO received instructions from the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, Rear Admiral Orin G. Harfin, U. S. Navy, and conferred with the Commanding Officer, Fleet Air Base, Captain Kenneth Whiting, U.S. Navy, and other officers of the District and Air Base relative to the probable path and location of the Earhart Plane in the event of a forced landing. This information seemed to indicate that the most probable reason for missing Howland Island would be that of stronger winds than normally expected in the region, and that the plane had probably been carried southeast of Howland, a greater distance than that from which Howland could be sighted. These opinions lead the Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. COLORADO, at this time to believe that southeast of Howland was the most likely area.

D

The Commanding Officer upon departure from Pearl Harbor 1300, 3 July, 1937, set course for Howland Island.

Prior to departure from Pearl Harbor, word was received that amateur operators in the vicinity of Los Angeles had intercepted position report of the Earhart plane as Latitude 1° 36' South, Longitude 179° East. Radio watch was set on 3105 Kcs and 6210 Kcs, the frequencies known to have been used by the plane, in addition to the regular watch on the distress frequency, 500 Kcs. Contact was made via broadcast receivers with the radio broadcasting stations in Honolulu which were delivering an almost constant stream of information relative to aircraft reports of reception of messages from the plane.

The broadcasting stations and the ITASCA continued to send messages to the plane. On the night of 3 and 4 July no signals were heard on the plane frequency by the ITASCA or COLORADO, but reports were received from Wyoming, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Australia and other points that signals, and in some cases voice reports, had been received from the plane. It was also reported that an unbroken carrier wave was heard, both the night of 3 July and the night of 4 July on the plane frequency. There was no doubt that many stations were calling the Earhart plane on the plane's frequency, some by voice and others by signals. All of these added to the confusion and doubtfulness of the authenticity of the reports.

At this time the Commanding Officer, U.S.S. COLORADO stated that pending further information it was his plan based on the present information, search operations conducted and being conducted by the ITASCA and information obtained from officers at the Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor and a knowledge of winds and currents in the vicinity of Howland and Baker Island to conduct search operations upon arrival at Howland Island in the area southeast of the island. The search to be conducted as follows: The U.S.S. COLORADO to steam east along the equator, the planes to be launched from the ship to search to the northward sixty miles then east for twelve miles then south passing the COLORADO to sixty miles south of the track of the COLORADO and then to complete the rectangle and return to the ship. Upon return to the ship, the planes were to be serviced and with new pilots take off for search of the next rectangle. It was expected that four flights of three planes each could be made per day.

On the Fourth of July word was received that Commander Destroyer Squadron Two, Captain Jonathan S. Dowell, U.S. Navy, in Command of the LEXINGTON Group, consisting of the LEXINGTON, The DRAYTON, the CUSHING and the LAMSON, was proceeding to the search area.

During the night of 4 - 5 July, constant radio search was conducted. The COLORADO heard the carrier wave which had been previously reported by other stations. The Broadcasting Station in Honolulu had been requesting the plane, if the broadcasts were heard, to send a message and if unable to send a message to send signals by means of cutting the carrier wave on and off. Another station reported that answering signals had been heard but none of the stations reporting having heard signals agreed on any one specific reply signal. About mid-night 4 July, word was received that the plane carried no emergency radio equipment and that if the plane had landed on the water the engines would be partly submerged and the radio equipment would be unable to transmit. This gave rise to the belief that the plane was on land, if the signals heard or messages received were to be considered in any way authentic.

At 0230 the 5th of July 1977, word was received that operators in Honolulu had received a message from the plane that its position was 281 miles north of Howland Island. It was further stated that this was believed to be authentic as three separate operators had heard the report.

This information placed a different picture in view, for if the position was correct it could indicate that the plane was on the water, and if signals were actually heard as had been believed, then the plane must be on land or able to transmit from the water. The U.S.S. COLORADO was still too far away to cause a change of course for the reported position. The ITASCA and SWAN left their positions immediately and proceeded towards the position 281 miles north of Howland Island. The U.S.S. MOOREBY which was near the reported position proceeded towards the position given, arriving on the 5th of July. The SWAN reached Latitude 5° North, Longitude 172°-45' West, and commenced searching to the westward. The ITASCA reached the reported position late in the afternoon of 5 July. The COLORADO during the 5th of July continued on its course to Howland Island. Due to the distance involved to the position 281 miles north of Howland Island, and to Howland Island from the position of the COLORADO at this time it would have served no useful purpose to change the course of the COLORADO directly to the suspected position. In the event that the SWAN, ITASCA and MOOREBY failed to locate the plane in the suspected position or area and radio information confirmed the original assumption of the plane being in the southeast quadrant from Howland Island any change now would delay ultimate search of that region.

It was not necessary for the Commanding Officer to decide until Tuesday forenoon on the course to follow. During the 5th two despatches of considerable interest and weight were received. The first despatch cast definite doubt as to the location as being 281 miles north of Howland Island, due to the fact that it stated again that the plane could not use radio if actually in the water, and the region to the north of Howland as previously stated was entirely water. Hence, if signals were received the location was definitely wrong. The other despatch referred to the opinion of the technical aides connected with the flight, that the plane would be found in the original line, which would indicate a position through Howland Island and the Phoenix Group, or in other words the southeast quadrant from Howland Island. These reports bore out the original assumption of the Commanding Officer, which was based on all information then available, that the logical quadrant for the position of the plane was the southeast quadrant.

The carrier wave was again heard during the night and the ITASCA and the broadcast station in Honolulu continued to broadcast to the plane instructions as to the replies to be given if the plane was heard. At 2132 on the night of the 5th the listeners in the radio room of the COLORADO were startled to hear on the plane frequency, the words, "Earhart from ITASCA did you send up a flare? If you did send up another. Please go ahead."

At 2140 the following was received, "Earhart Plane from ITASCA, we see second flare, we are coming for you, we are starting toward you." At 2145, "We see your flare and are proceeding towards you", these reports continued to be broadcast by the ITASCA, and apparently to a listening world, the position 281 miles north of Howland Island in which the ITASCA, SWAN and MOORBY were searching was the correct position. It was therefore with great sadness that the following was received shortly thereafter, "Report in error, objects sighted are apparently meteors Howland reported same effect." And the SWAN verified the opinion by reporting sighting meteors at the time the ITASCA was believed to be sighting a flare from the Earhart Plane.

On the 6th of July, 1937, the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District was directed to take charge of all Naval Forces based Pearl Harbor and those in the search area. The Coast Guard Cutter, the ITASCA was further directed to operate under Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District. The Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, directed the Commanding Officer, U.S.S. COLORADO to take charge of Naval and Coast Guard Units in the Search Area and coordinate the Earhart Search Unit, until the arrival of Commander Destroyer Squadron Two.

Shortly after the flares were known to be false a report was received that further investigation of the report received on 3 July that on 3105 Kcs a woman's voice had made four distress signal calls followed by KHAQQ, followed by "225 garble, Off Howland, battery very weak, can't last long, garble indicated sandbank", had been made and considerable credulance was given to the possibility of the report having been actually received. The only banks charted are south and east of Howland Island. A report was received from Mr. Putnam stressing the Phoenix Island Group and stating that headwinds aloft had been much stronger than expected for the flight. Again it was stated that the Lockheed Aircraft Engineers stated that the radio could not operate unless the plane was on land. It was further suggested by Mr. Putnam, that a plane from the COLORADO investigate the Phoenix Island Area. The possibility that the position 281 miles north of Howland was in error and might have been south and southeast was also considered. A third report also stated that a strong signal had been heard and a man's voice calling the ITASCA. A fourth signal report stated "Position 281 miles north of Howland, drifting northwest." This report was definitely known later to be a false report.

The search in the northwest quadrant was being carried on by ships. The plane's radio was believed to have been heard, if some of the many reports were presumed to be authentic, hence on land. Considerations irrespective of radio had pointed to the southeast quadrant, and at this time still did. The southeast quadrant from Howland, except for one unverified report, still was the most likely. The Commanding Officer therefore decided to hold to his original decision, that of searching to the southeast of Howland, with one modification, that being to search by planes, the land areas of the Phoenix Group, prior to the large water areas. Large areas of intervening water, of course would be covered at the same time.

Accordingly at 0800, Tuesday, the ship's head was changed to 205° true and speed increased to eighteen point three knots (18.3). Arrangements were made in answer to a request from the ITASCA for a rendezvous with that ship for 0600, the 7th of July, for the purpose of fueling the ITASCA and provisioning her from the COLORADO. The SWAN was directed to search to Latitude 0°, Longitude 175° West.

The Commander Coast Guard sent word that he had communicated with persons familiar with the methods of navigation of Mr. Noonan, and that Mr. Noonan would take a fix shortly before dawn, correct course for destination, and determine line of position when near the end of estimated run. This procedure would allow a flight of about 300 miles without a good fix. If short of gas, he probably would follow the line of position to the nearest land. The line of position $337^{\circ} - 157^{\circ}$ was given in one of the last reports received from the plane. It was also stated in a report that the plane was short of gas.

Considering the question as to what Mr. Noonan did do, it must be considered which way he would steer on the line. To the northwest of Howland was wide stretches of ocean, to the southeast were spots of land. To a seaman in low visibility the thing to do when in doubt of own position would be to head for the open sea. The land would be the place to get away from. To the Air Navigator with position in doubt and flying a land plane it is apparent that the thing to do would be to steer down the line towards the most probable land. To the Air Navigator, land would be a rescue, just as the sea would be to the seaman. Would and did Mr. Noonan do this or had he other reasons to do otherwise? The answer was of course unknown but logical deduction pointed to the southeast quadrant.

At day break, Wednesday, 7 July, the ITASCA met, fueled and provisioned from the COLORADO. Upon completion the ITASCA was directed by the Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. COLORADO to proceed to a point $0^{\circ} - 23'$ South Latitude, Longitude 178° West, and from there to search a sector, eastward and south from a line bearing 157° from that point and to search to the eastward a distance of 120 miles. This position and area was chosen as a place for search due to thoroughly considering the probable drift of the plane, had it landed on the morning of 2 July to the south of Howland Island, while on a line 157° to or from Howland Island. The ITASCA was further instructed to rectify this area to be searched in accordance with the current found in the region in order to continually take into consideration the drift of the plane if on the water.

At 1435, the COLORADO approached the westward charted islands of the Phoenix Group and planes were catapulted searching ahead for the charted position of the Reef and Sand Bank north of Winslow Reef and southeast of Howland Island.

Although the planes searched ahead from the ship and crossed the Equator covering an advance of approximately 100 miles ahead of the ship and beyond the believed location of the Reef and Sand Bank, and several miles to the Eastward of the charted position, it was not located. At 1845, the planes were recovered in a position south of the Equator in Longitude $174^{\circ} 30'$ West. When the planes were returned to the ship, the course of the ship was changed to 260° until clear of any possible danger of the Reef and Sand Bank, and Winslow Reef, and then to the southward.

On the 8th of July, the SWAN reached the position Latitude $0^{\circ} 00'$, Longitude 175° in the afternoon, and was then directed to proceed to a point 2° South, 172° West, continuing to cover a search across the northeast section of the water area of the Phoenix Islands.

At 0657, the COLORADO launched planes from $175^{\circ}-30'$ West, 1° South, and conducted an East-West search over the charted region of Winslow Reef and Reef and Sand Bank. A thorough search of this region failed to locate either of the two reefs, and the water covered showed no signs of the Earhart Plane.

When the planes returned they were immediately refueled and were sent out again covering together a front of seventy miles, thirty-five miles on each side of the course. While the COLORADO continued ahead, the planes searched to the left thirty-five miles then to the right crossing the ship's course a distance of thirty-five miles beyond the ship's track, and then completing the rectangle. This method of search continued until 1535 when the planes returned with a report that although the visibility was exceptionally good nothing was sighted. The next flight from 1620 to 1730 extended the advance of the seventy mile front to a total of fifty miles, making an area of 3,500 miles covered by the last two flights. The first flight to the eastward covered at least 1,500 square miles. From the point of recovery of the planes at 1730 the COLORADO proceeded to Latitude $2^{\circ}-37'$ South, Longitude 175° West where a course of 180° was set for the night.

During the previous twenty-four hours two reports of the plane had been received. A report was received from Melbourne, Australia "Plane between Howland and Samoa Group, ten hours West." No further information was given nor was the report verified. The other report was received at 1800 stating that a reputable citizen of Hilo at 1515 had heard Amelia Earhart call the ITASCA and the ITASCA answer. The ITASCA was immediately asked for verification and stated that they had no word. What then did it mean, was a joke intended, a fraud perpetrated or a mistake made?

The mystery was solved shortly by the report that the listener had accidentally turned in on the "March of Time" broadcast and believed the reproduction and acting to be real.

At 0700 on the morning of 9 July in Latitude $3^{\circ}54'$ South, Longitude $174^{\circ}46'$ West, the COLORADO launched her planes in the direction of McKean Island. Upon locating McKean and searching the vicinity, the planes continued to Gardner and then to Carondelet Reef before returning to the ship in Latitude $4^{\circ}30'$ South, Longitude $174^{\circ}24'$ West. After the vain search for Reef and Sand Bank and for Winslow Reef it was to be expected that the other Islands did not or might not exist. They were however, all located by the planes and although they were not in the exact charted position they were seen from a considerable distance and the planes had no difficulty in locating them.

McKean Island showed unmistakable signs of having at one time been inhabited. On the northwest side of the Island there appeared buildings of the adobe type. No one was seen on either Gardner Island or McKean Island.

McKean Island was such that a plane could have made a safe crash landing either on the beach or in the center of the Island. No dwellings appeared on Gardner or any other signs of inhabitation. A long shallow lagoon extends the entire length of the Island and through most of the width.

A seaplane could land in the lagoon and it is believed that a land plane could make a forced landing there, and the occupants walk ashore. Coral reefs extended out from the shore line for about 150 yards. At Gardner Island a four thousand ton tramp steamer has piled up head on and remains there with her back broken. Groves of Coconut palms grow on the western end and the entire island is covered with tropical vegetation. Myriads of birds cover both islands.

Carondelet Reef was under water but plainly could be seen from the planes at a distance of 10 miles.

This was of interest in regards to the possibility of Winslow Reef existing and the Reef and Sand Bank to the Northwest ward of Winslow Reef. If the two existed, it is apparent from the way in which Carondelet Reef was seen, that they are many miles from their charted position.

Upon recovery of the planes from the morning flight the ship continued on course 090° and at 1400 launched planes in Latitude 4° 33' South, Longitude 173° 45' West. The purpose of the flight in the afternoon was to search the water ahead of the ship to locate Hull Island and to search the island and the water in the vicinity for any signs of the Earhart Plane.

As the planes approached Hull Island natives were seen running out of their huts and waving clothes at the plane. Lieutenant Lambrecht, the senior aviator and in charge of the flight, landed for the purpose of asking if the inhabitants had seen or heard of the Earhart Plane. A European Resident Manager of the natives came out in a canoe to meet the plane. He and his natives were astonished and excited in seeing the three planes. The Resident Manager asked where the planes were from and when informed Honolulu, nearly upset the canoe in his excitement. It was necessary to explain to him that the planes had not come direct but had arrived by the battleship COLORADO which was relatively close by. The Resident Manager said that there was a radio on the island, however, he knew nothing of the Earhart flight and created doubt of his having ever heard of Miss Earhart herself. Neither he nor his natives had seen or heard a plane. The planes returned to the ship in Latitude 4° 33' South, Longitude 173° 03' West.

During the night the ship steamed north and then east arriving at Latitude 3° 51' South, Longitude 172° 15' West, at 0700 the 10th of July.

The SWAN had been directed upon arrival at Latitude 2° South, Longitude 170° West to proceed to rendezvous with the COLORADO in Latitude 3° 10' South, Longitude 172° West at 1100 and to search in the vicinity of Canton Island enroute. The planes were launched at 0700 and proceeded to Sydney, Phoenix, Enderbury and Birnie Islands in the order named, and at 1015 in Latitude 3° 22' South, Longitude 172° 20' West were recovered by the ship. Sydney was the only island which showed any signs of recent habitation and in appearance was much the same as Gardner Island. It had the usual shallow lagoon which in this case was large enough for a seaplane to make a safe landing. Phoenix and Birnie Islands had the appearance of a lagoon, but the latter island being very small. Enderbury had a lagoon but it was very shallow.

When the planes were recovered, the SWAN was taken alongside and refueled and provisioned. Upon completion of fueling the SWAN was directed to search in a northwest direction across the open water north of the Phoenix Group enroute Latitude 2° South, Longitude 173° West.

The COLORADO at 1445 in Latitude $08^{\circ} - 22'$ South, Longitude $175^{\circ} - 45'$ West launched planes for a search to and of Canton Island. This island was located and carefully searched by the planes. It was the largest of any of the islands searched. Its lagoon was deeper than those of the other islands but was crossed with coral reefs in such a manner that it would be dangerous to land except at two places, one at each end of the island. At the western end there remains the shacks and scaffolding erected by the recent eclipse expedition. When the planes were recovered, the course was set at 350° to take the COLORADO to a rendezvous at 0700, 12 July, with the destroyers approaching the search area with the LEXINGTON Group.

Upon fueling the destroyers the COLORADO was detached from the search group and directed to return to the West Coast in order to debark the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Students and Naval Reserve Officers. These students with the distinguished guests embarked for a month cruise, which extended into a six weeks cruise, covering many more miles than was expected at the time of embarkation, and crossing the equator twice. The fact of crossing the equator was not neglected by Neptunus Rex and his court, although they postponed their visit in order not to interfere with the operations in connection with the search. While they arrived aboard long after the COLORADO had crossed the Equator, the reception and initiation into the Realm of Neptunus Rex was fittingly and properly conducted by Neptunus Rex and his court assisted by the Shellbacks for the benefit of the Pollywogs.

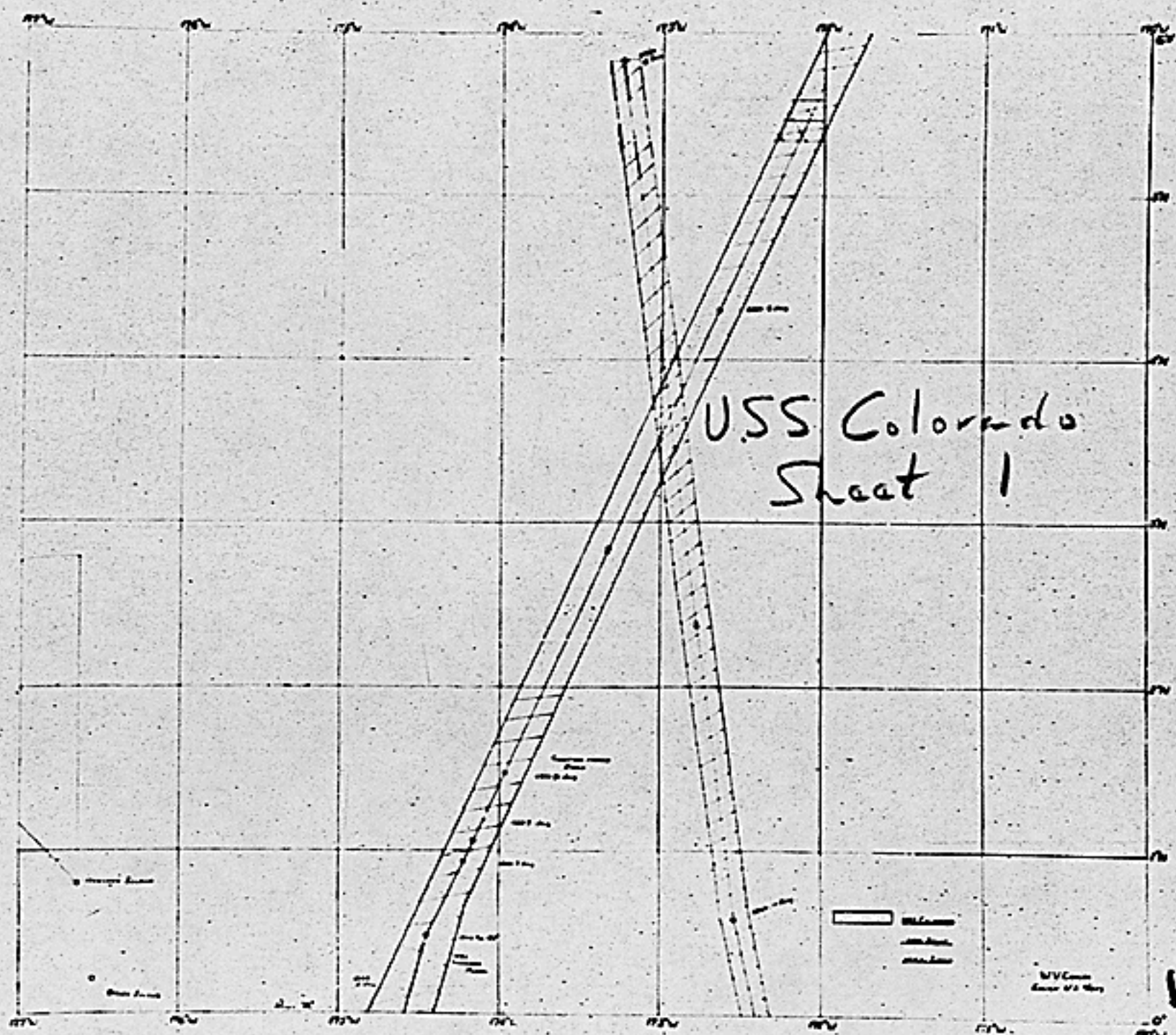
If it is considered that the search area began with the position where the COLORADO fueled the ITASCA, 0600, 7 July, and ended with the position where the COLORADO fueled the destroyers of the LEXINGTON Group 12 July it will be found that the COLORADO steamed 1240 miles, and that her planes flew 21.8 hours each, 1903 miles each and that the COLORADO with her planes covered within the radius of visibility an area of 25,490 square miles. Adding to this additional mileage to and from Pearl Harbor to the Search Area the COLORADO steamed 3,980 miles and 320 hours, more than expected when the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Cruise commenced.

As this is written the LEXINGTON Group is approaching the Search Area and will be able to conduct an extensive search over a large water area. The COLORADO has, however, covered the land area within a radius of 450 miles of Howland Island, and definitely ascertained that the Earhart plane is not on land within the region unless on an unknown, uncharted and unsighted reef.

W. L. FRIEDEL

Copy to:
CINCPAC
COMBATFOR
COMBATSHIPS

D



3

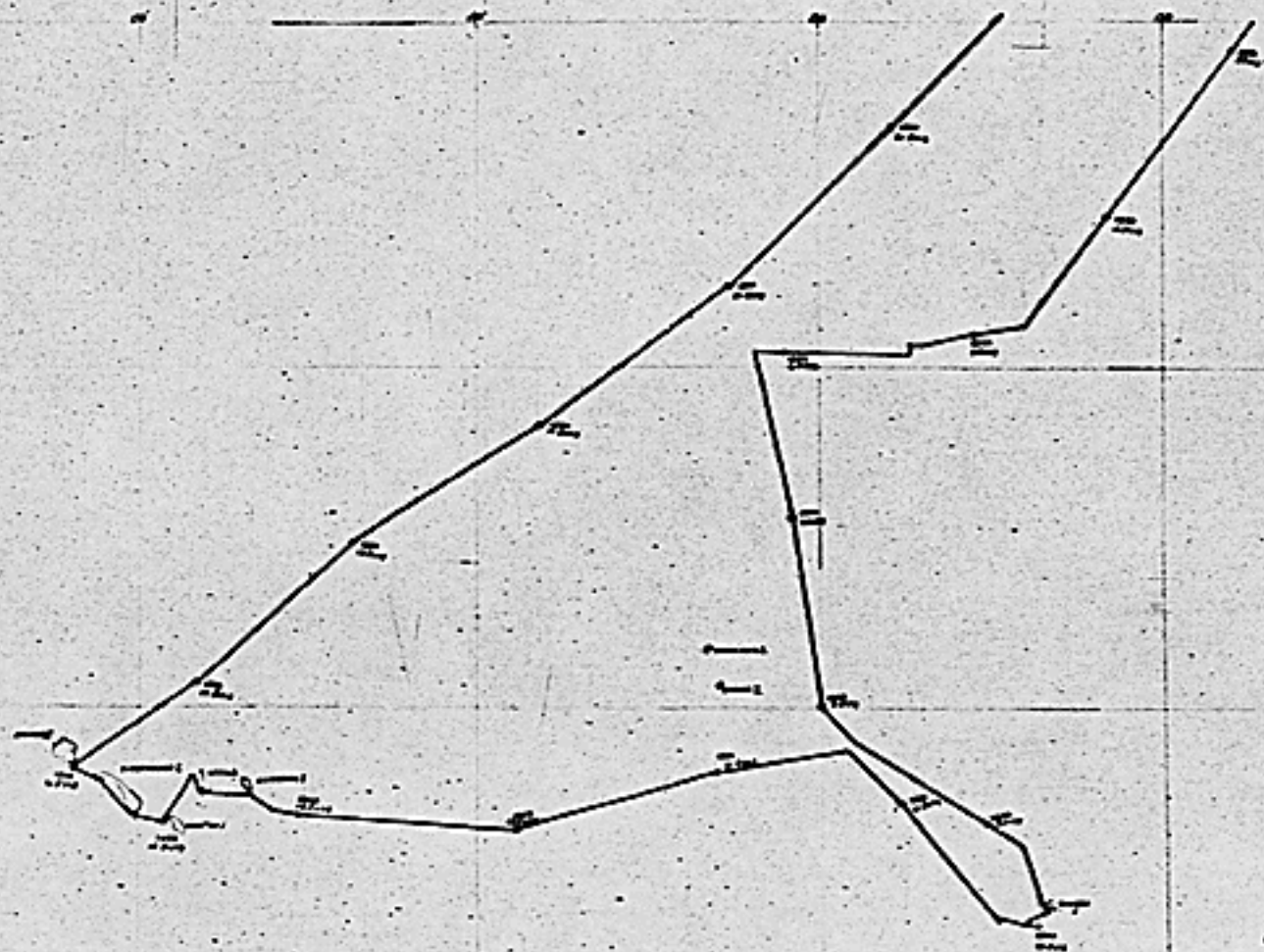
U.S.S. Colorado
Sheet 2

Legend
1. 100 Fathoms
2. 200 Fathoms
3. 300 Fathoms
4. 400 Fathoms
5. 500 Fathoms
6. 600 Fathoms
7. 700 Fathoms
8. 800 Fathoms
9. 900 Fathoms
10. 1000 Fathoms

1000 Fathoms
1000 Fathoms

PHOENIX ISLANDS

F



4-10-1964
 4-10-1964

4

